

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



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GOVERNOR

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PO Box 4210
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January 31, 2008

Dear Child Care Providers:

Attached please find the Request for Proposal Schedule for the State Fiscal Year 2009. This schedule outlines the Best Beginnings opportunities to assist with your professional development and program needs. Please pay particular attention to the deadlines for the various programs. The field of early childhood continues to evolve in regard to public awareness and the importance of high quality early care and education for young children and families. Research continues to support the importance of investing in services for children pre-natal to age 5; much of this is known by those of us who work daily with children in our programs. It is an exciting time to be an early childhood professional!

At the Early Childhood Services Bureau we are excited about the future and recognize that in order to best meet the needs of young children, their families, and the early care provider, we must design programs that are systemic and focus on quality experiences in a variety of settings and approaches. As part of this process, we have evaluated the effectiveness of the programs offered through our office, including the Best Beginnings programs. We have worked closely with the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council (MECAC) in reviewing national research along with state and local issues and trends to better address the needs of young children in Montana. At the same time, the Early Childhood Services Bureau recognizes that providers work hard and finding the time and/or resources to improve quality outcomes for children can often be difficult.

As a result, we are excited to share with you our newest endeavor, a quality rating improvement system (QRIS) which should roll out in 2010. This new quality rating improvement system is an off shoot of our current Star Quality Program, but with many positive changes. Our goal is to create a system that is easy to navigate and that is supported with measurable quality indicators that lead to long term, sustainable outcomes for children and families. To do this, we are creating a 5 star system in which the first star level is met by becoming a licensed/registered facility. Each additional star comes with other quality indicators that lead to recognition of having achieved that star level. The best part of this system design is that it is voluntary and there are many built in support options to assist you, the early care and education professional, in achieving the star level that best meets your professional needs and goals. Incentives will be available to help you move from one star to another, which may include money, consultation, and individualized professional development support. The key is to identify the star level a provider is currently at and then establish a plan to move up through the system. Incentives will be available to providers, whether they take children receiving state scholarships or not; however, those programs serving scholarship

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children will be eligible for increased reimbursement rates at the higher star levels. The new quality rating improvement program is still in the design phase and we are encouraging feedback throughout the process. Part of the feedback process on the details includes continued work with MECAC, focus groups, and a possible statewide METnet meeting.

As we plan for program implementation in 2010, the Early Childhood Services Bureau has made the following adjustments to the Best Beginnings programs to ensure a smooth transition as we design and implement this new initiative. For 2009, we no longer will be offering new child care provider grants, but plan to continue provider grants that are in renewal process for their 3 year cycle. A large portion of the monies used for provider grants in the past will now be diverted to our mini grant program until the new system is in place, which means more opportunities for more providers to access mini grants. Statistics in our office show that the mini grant program is one of our most popular and successful.

All of us at the Early Childhood Services Bureau wish you a happy and healthy 2008 and wish to thank you for all you do on behalf of young children and families in our state. Please contact us at any time if we can be of further assistance to you in your very important work or if you'd like further information on our QRIS work.

Sincerely,

Jamie Palagi, Chief
Early Childhood Services Bureau

Early Childhood Services Bureau

2009 Request for Proposal (RFP) & Renewal Schedule for Organizations

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Updated annual management plans for sponsoring organizations are due by **September 15 of each year**. Renewal materials will be available by August 1 of each year. For information, contact the CACFP state office at (406)444-4347 or toll free 1-888-307-9333.

Specialized Training in Early Care and Education

Applications will become available March 17, 2008 from www.childcare.mt.gov or from ECSB.

Applications must be received in the ECSB office no later than 5 pm, April 25, 2008.

Award date – June 6, 2008.

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| Who can apply? | Training entities or provider groups operating as private non-profit or for-profit organizations, independent contractors and institutions of higher education wishing to provide Specialized Training in Early Childhood Development for Early Care and Education practitioners. (including business training related to operation of a child care business). |
| How much money is available? | Approximately \$140,000 is available. |

Child Care Resource & Referral Renewals:

Renewal applications will become available June 2, 2008. Renewal applications will be e-mailed to each CCR&R. Applications must be received in the ECSB office no later than 5 pm, August 1, 2008. These dates are contingent upon funding formula approval.

Mentor Projects in Early Care and Education:

Renewal applications will be sent to current contract holders June 12, 2008 from the ECSB. Renewal applications must be received in the ECSB office no later than 5 pm July 24, 2008. Award date – August 21, 2008.

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| Who can apply? | Training entities or provider groups operating as private non-profit or for-profit organizations, and institutions of higher education. Applicants must be qualified to provide training in the area of early childhood development and/or related topics for early care and education. |
| How much money is available? | Approximately \$125,000 is available to fund approximately five to eight "Mentoring Programs" in early Care and Education. It is expected that selected projects will be funded at \$15,000. to \$25,000. |

Higher Education Coursework in Early Care and Education:

Renewal applications will be sent to current contract holders May 2, 2008 from the ECSB. Renewal application must be received in the ECSB office not later than 5 pm June 12, 2008. Award date – July 18, 2008.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES BUREAU**

1-866-239-0458

www.childcare.mt.gov

Contact Lisa Murphy limurphy@mt.gov or
(406) 444-1400

Early Care & Education Specialized Training Grant
Mentoring Grant in Early Care & Education
Higher Education Training in Early Care and Education

Contact Mary Musil mmusil@mt.gov or (406) 444-4086
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

For Information about the MT Early Care & Education Practitioner Registry:
THE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE AT THE
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROJECT - MSU, Bozeman
1-800-213-6310 or (406) 994-4746
ecp@montana.edu

YOUR LOCAL CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCY

See List Below for the CCR&R Agency Near You

Billings - District VII HRDC - 247-4732 or (800) 433-1411

Bozeman - Child Care Connections - 587-7786 or (800) 962-0418

Butte - Butte 4C's - 723-4019 or (800) 794-4061

Glasgow - Hi-Line Home Programs, Inc - 228-9431 or (800) 659-3673

Glendive - DEAP CCR&R - 377-4909 or (800) 578-4909

Great Falls - Family Connections - 761-6010 or (800) 696-4503

Havre - District IV HRDC - 265-6743 or (800) 640-6743

Helena - Child Care Partnerships - 443-4608 or (888) 244-5368

Kalispell - The Nurturing Center - 756-1414 or (800) 204-0644

Lewistown - District VI HRDC - 535-7488 or (800) 766-3018

Miles City - DEAP Child Care - 234-6034 or (800) 224-6034

Missoula - Child Care Resources - 728-6446 or (800) 728-6446

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